CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method for inputting at least one parameter into a computer comprising the following steps:

for at least one input parameter, displaying on a display at least one associated primary graphical input device that has a state that is graphically controllable by a user via at least one predetermined primary input action and that corresponds to a value of the respective input parameter;

sensing user selection of the primary graphical input device;

associating with the primary graphical input device at least one predetermined non-graphical, secondary input action corresponding to secondary input by the user of the value of the respective input parameter;

while the primary graphical input device is selected:

sensing any of the primary as well as any of the secondary input actions of the user;

interpreting the sensed input action of the user as input data; and

setting the value of the input parameter to correspond to the input data.

2. A method as in claim 1, further including the steps of generating on the display a secondary graphical input device upon sensing user initiation of any secondary input action, and displaying within the secondary graphical input device data entered by the user as the secondary input action.

3. A method as in claim 1, further including the step of associating the values of a plurality of parameters with positions of a corresponding plurality of adjustable displayed portions of a single primary graphical input device.

4. A method as in claim 3, further including the following steps:

associating a respective activation region of the primary graphical input device with each displayed portion;

sensing user selection of one of the activation regions; and

upon user initiation of a secondary input action, setting the value of the parameter associated with the selected activation region equal to data entered by the user.

5. A method as in claim 3, further including the following steps:

associating a single activation region of the primary graphical input device with a plurality of the parameters;

sensing user selection of the activation region;

sensing entry by the user of a plurality of input values via secondary input action; and

setting the values of the respective parameters according to the input values.

6. A method as in claim 2, further including the following steps:

comparing a number of values input by the user into the secondary graphical input device with the number of parameters associated with corresponding displayed portion of the primary graphical input device;

if the number of values input is greater than the number of parameters, subdividing an adjustable displayed portion of the primary graphical input device into a number of displayed adjustable portions corresponding to the number of values input; and

if the number of values input is less than the number of parameters, joining corresponding ones of the adjustable displayed portions.

7. A method as in claim 1, in which the parameter is a query parameter in a database analysis routine.

8. A method as in claim 1, in which:

the primary graphical input device is a page-selection scroll bar of a word-processing program; and

the parameter is a page number.

9. A method as in claim 1, in which the input data and input parameter are alphanumeric strings.

10. A method as in claim 1, in which:

primary user input actions are performed by maneuvering a cursor-control device; and

secondary user input actions are performed using an alphanumeric input device.

11. A method as in claim 1, further including the following steps:

selecting the primary graphical input device by maneuvering a non-alphanumeric, cursor-control device to position an on-screen cursor on the primary graphical input device;

performing the primary input actions using the non-alphanumeric, cursor-control device; and

performing the secondary input actions using an alphanumeric input device.

12. A method for inputting data into an application executing on a computer, in which the application has a plurality of user-selectable features, the method comprising the following steps:

for at least one, first input parameter of a first user-selectable feature of the application, displaying on a display at least one associated graphical input device, which has a state that is graphically controllable by a user via at least one primary user action and that corresponds to a value of the first input parameter;

sensing user selection of the graphical input device;

associating with the graphical input device at least one predetermined non-graphical, secondary input action corresponding to input by the user of at least one secondary input parameter via at least one secondary user action;

while the graphical input device is selected:

sensing both the primary and secondary input actions of the user;

upon sensing any primary user action, applying the first input parameter as input to the first user-selectable feature; and

upon sensing any secondary user action, applying the second input parameter as input to a second user-selectable feature.

13. A method as in claim 12, in which the first input parameter has a first characteristic, further including the following steps:

upon sensing any secondary user action, determining an input characteristic of the secondary input parameter;

if the input characteristic is the same as the first characteristic, applying the secondary input parameter as input to the first user-selectable feature; and

if the input characteristic differs from the first characteristic, applying the secondary input parameter as input to the second user-selectable feature.

14. A system for inputting at least one parameter into a computer comprising:

A) a display;

B) a primary physical input device forming means for entering primary user input data;

C) a secondary physical input device forming means for entering secondary user input data;

D) a memory for storing a value of the parameter for use in an application;

E) display interface means:

1) for displaying a primary graphical input device on the display, the primary graphical input device having at least one graphically controllable feature whose state is controllable by the first physical input device and corresponds to a value of the input parameter;

2) for sensing user activation of the primary graphical input device;

3) for sensing primary and secondary user actions corresponding, respectively, to user entry of the primary and secondary input data;

4) for interpreting the sensed input action of the user as valid input data; and

5) for setting the value of the input parameter to correspond to the valid input data.

15. A system as in claim 14, in which:

the primary physical input device is a non-alphanumeric, cursor-control device forming means for positioning an on-screen cursor on the primary graphical input device; and

the secondary physical input device is an alphanumeric input device.